Food Storage

908.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish food storage methods that are designed to meet manufacturer's recommendations, health and safety codes, state laws and local ordinances, and to safely preserve food, extend storage life and reduce food waste.

908.2 POLICY

Food and food supplies will be stored in sanitary and temperature-controlled areas in compliance with state and local health laws and standards.

908.3 PROCEDURES

The food services manager shall be responsible for establishing procedures to ensure the safe preservation and storage of food in the most cost-effective manner, beginning with the receipt of the raw materials through the delivery of prepared meals.

When receiving food deliveries, food services staff shall inspect the order for quality and freshness and shall ensure that the order is correct by checking the order received against the order form. All delivery vehicles shall be inspected by food services staff to make certain that the vehicles are clean, free from vermin infestations and are maintained at the appropriate temperature for the type of food being carried.

If food quality and freshness do not meet commonly accepted standards or if it is determined that proper storage temperatures have not been maintained, the employee checking the order in will refuse the item and note the refusal on the invoice.

Any food destined for return to the vendor should be stored separately from any food destined for consumption. The food services manager will contact the vendor and arrange for replacement of the unacceptable food items.

Storage temperatures in all food storage areas should be checked and logged on a daily basis. Records of the temperature readings should be maintained in accordance with established records retention schedules (WAC 44-14-03005).

An evaluation system should be established for food stored in any area with temperature readings outside the normal range and should include contingency plans for menu changes, food storage relocation or food destruction, as indicated. All actions taken to ensure the safety of the food served should be documented and retained in accordance with established records retention schedules (WAC 44-14-03005).

908.4 DRY FOOD STORAGE

Canned items and dry food that does not need refrigeration should be stored in a clean, dry, secure storage area where temperatures are maintained between 45 and 80 degrees. Temperatures shall be monitored.

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All storage areas should be kept locked when they are not in actual use. New food shipments shall be placed behind existing like items and rotated using a first-in first-out rotation method.

Personal clothing and personal items shall not be stored in food storage areas.

908.5 REFRIGERATED AND FROZEN STORAGE

Unless health codes dictate otherwise refrigerators must be kept between 32 and 41 degrees. Deep chill refrigerators will be set between 28 and 32 degrees for cook-chill products, dairy and meat items, to extend shelf life. Other than the defrosting cycle, all freezers must maintain a temperature of 0 degrees or lower.

All freezer and refrigerator storage areas should have at least two thermometers to monitor temperatures. One thermometer should have a display visible to the outside. The second thermometer shall be placed in the warmest place inside the storage area. Daily temperature readings shall be recorded on the storage area checklist. Any variance outside of acceptable temperature range shall be immediately addressed.

All food must be covered and dated when stored. Cooked items shall not be stored beneath raw meats. Cleaned vegetables shall be stored separately from unwashed vegetables. Storage practices shall use a first-in first-out rotation method.

908.5.1 MAINTENANCE OF REFRIGERATED AND FREEZER AREAS

Refrigeration storage units should be cleaned daily, including mopping floors and wiping down walls. A more thorough cleaning should occur weekly to include dismantling and cleaning shelves. Food services staff should inspect the contents of freezers and storage units daily to ensure all items are properly sealed and labeled.

908.5.2 STORAGE OF CLEANING SUPPLIES AND MATERIALS

The storage of soaps, detergents, waxes, cleaning compounds, insect spray and any other toxic or poisonous materials are kept in a separate, locked storage area to prevent cross contamination with food and other kitchen supplies.

908.6 WASTE MANAGEMENT

The food services manager shall develop and maintain a waste management plan that ensures the garbage is removed daily. This plan also should include methods to minimize the waste of edible food and to dispose of non-edible or waste food material without utilizing a landfill.

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